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# Kaktos Komments

*a bimonthly publication of the Houston Cactus and Succulent Society  
to promote the study of cacti and other succulents*



Euphorbia milii  
by Karina Boese



**Houston Cactus and Succulent Society**  
**Founded in 1963**  
**Affiliated with the Cactus & Succulent Society of America**

## Membership

Andrea Varesic

On July 27th the HCSS met in person at the Multi-Purpose Center. We had sixteen members in attendance. We would like to welcome Jacob Martin, who joined as a new member this month. The cactus of the month was presented by David Van Langen, *Echinomastus warnockii*. Succulent of the month, *Monadenium ritchiei*, was presented by Karina Boese. Thank you to everybody that brought a dish for our annual July dinner. A good time was had by all.



On August 24 the HCSS met in both person and on zoom at the Multi-Purpose Center. In attendance we had eighteen members and four guests. Our program was given by Josie Watts and Bruce Moffett. It was a pictorial of the Jardin Botanico de Quito at the Ecuador Botanical Garden. Door prizes were provided by Liliana Rodriguez and Andrea Varesic. A special thanks to Jacob Martin, who provided seedlings of *Ferocactus glaucescens* for all who attended. Our president, Josie Watts, discussed our upcoming sale.

## Calendar:

- September 14, 2022** 7:00 pm Board Meeting via Zoom
- September 16-17** Fall Sale, Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, 9:00am - 5:00pm Friday, 9:00 am - 3:00pm Saturday
- September 28, 2022** 7:00 pm Membership Meeting, Metropolitan Multi-Service Center  
 Program: Big Bend National Park by Karina Boese
- October 26, 2022** 7:00 pm Membership Meeting, Metropolitan Multi-Service Center  
 Program: Desert Botanical Garden and Saguaro National Park by Andrea Varesic
- November 1, 2022** Deadline for submitting articles for the next KK.

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**September Cactus of the Month****Echo Pang****Thelocactus Hexaedrophorus**

The genus *Thelocactus* comprises 10 species of cacti native to Mexico and the southwestern United States. Some of them are: *Thelocactus hexaedrophorus*, *Thelocactus bicolor*, *Thelocactus nidulans*, *Thelocactus lophothele*, *Thelocactus conothelos* and *Thelocactus setispinus*.

**Name:** *Thelocactus hexaedrophorus*

**Scientific synonyms:** *Echinocactus hexaedrophorus*

**Habitat:** They are observed at altitude from 1100 to 2300 meters above sea level; on gentle limestone hill slopes and plains in the Chihuahuan Desert, savanna, and grasslands along with other species of cacti and succulents including *Mammillaria parkinsonii*, *Mammillaria aureilanata*, *Ariocarpus retusus*, *Gymnocactus knuthianus*, *Coryphantha maiz-tablasensis*, *Astrophytum myriostigma*, *Echinocactus platyacanthus* and *Echinocereus blanckii*, *Coryphantha radians*, *Ferocactus latispinus*, *Echinocereus pectinatus*, *Echinocereus cinerascens*, *Opuntia rastrera*, *Opuntia lindheimeri*, *Opuntia imbricata*, *Myrtillocactus geometrizans*, *Heliabravoa chende*, *Agave salmiana*, *Yucca filifera*, *Jatropha spatbulata* and *Fritillaria lanceolata*.





**Description (Stem, Flowers, Fruits):** *Theolocactus hexaedrophorus* is a solitary cactus with flattened stems. They are small cacti (barely reach 8 cm in height and 15 cm in diameter) with a bluish green body. They have relatively large rounded pentagonal or hexagonal shaped tubercles with woolly areoles with both radial and central spines. Their spines are quite colorful (red or pinkish white; older spines are opaque) and highly variable (long or short, straight or curved).

*Theolocactus hexaedrophorus* is a must-have for collection if you love cactus flowers. Mature plant produces white showy flowers merging out from the new woolly areoles on top in summer months. The flowers can reach 5-8 cm in diameter that cover the plant body. (*Theolocactus Hexaedrophorus sub. lloydii* is the only variety that has pinkish flower.) They have a subtly sweet fragrance. Buds develop slowly over a course of a couple of weeks before they open. In my observation, it seems that their delicate buds have to “push” through a spine cage to bloom! The central spines on top of the cactus serve to protect the young buds in the middle while they are forming. The spine cage opens up about two days before blossom, letting the flower stalk to extend taller and taller while providing protection. The coordinated action of the spines and buds is very amazing to observe and record.

After successful pollination between two plants, green magenta fruits (7-11 mm) can form. It is best to wait for the fruit to be significantly overripe before harvesting seeds.

**Cultivation:** *Theolocactus Hexaedrophorus* thrives in Full sun to light shade. Here in Houston, I grow it in a 4x5 inch terracotta pot with 80% mineral grits (perlite: chicken grits = 1:1) and 20% cactus soil. I pick a taller pot for this cactus because its taproot goes deeper than wider. It is kept together with my other cacti on an elevated bench shielded from rain in my south-facing backyard. Small cacti (4 inch and under) receive at once or twice a week watering in growing months depending on weather and cacti species. They receive 8-10 hours of sun (I use a 30% shade cloth)



from spring to fall to protect small ones. I use fertilization for cacti at a minimum. Since inconsistent information is often found about cactus hardiness on the Internet, small potted cacti will go in my greenhouse to overwinter (better safe than sorry). Some resources state that *T. Hexaedrophorus* is hardy zone 9a-11 (-6.6°C-4.5°C; 20°F-40°F), others state that the cactus is hardy to 5°C. Although watering is generally not suggested for winter, I choose to water sparingly if the cactus is still showing growth. I believe proper winter watering reduces root loss during dormancy. But the amount of water needs to be given at a strict limit (again, better safe than sorry).

#### REFERENCES:

1. [http://www.llifile.com/Encyclopedia/CACTI/Family/Cactaceae/10830/Thelocactus\\_hexaedrophorus](http://www.llifile.com/Encyclopedia/CACTI/Family/Cactaceae/10830/Thelocactus_hexaedrophorus)
2. [https://www.cactus-art.biz/schede/THELOCACTUS/Thelocactus\\_hexaedrophorus/Thelocactus\\_hexaedrophorus/Thelocactus\\_hexaedrophorus.htm](https://www.cactus-art.biz/schede/THELOCACTUS/Thelocactus_hexaedrophorus/Thelocactus_hexaedrophorus/Thelocactus_hexaedrophorus.htm)
3. <http://desertmuseum.org/visit/sheets/Thehex.pdf>
4. <https://davesgarden.com/guides/pf/go/71309/#b>
5. <http://www.consultaplantas.com/index.php/en/plants-from-s-to-z/2800-thelocactus-hexaedrophorus-or-echinocactus-hexaedrophorus-care-and-growing>
6. Habitat photos: [https://uk.inaturalist.org/taxa/273612-Thelocactus-hexaedrophorus/browse\\_photos](https://uk.inaturalist.org/taxa/273612-Thelocactus-hexaedrophorus/browse_photos)



**September Succulent of the Month****Karina Boese****Monadenium stapelioides / Euphorbia neostapelioides**

COMMON NAME: Euphorbia succulenta

## SYNONYMS:

Euphorbia succulenta (Schweick.) Bruyns Euphorbia World 3: 5 2007

Euphorbia neostapelioides Bruyns, Taxon 55: 414 (2006)

Monadenium stapelioides Pax Bot. Jahrb. Syst. 43: 89 (1909)



Monadenium stapelioides variegata

## ORIGIN &amp; HABITAT:

Native to Kenya (Laikipia District) and Tanzania (Northern Highlands). In their habitat, they grow among grass on rocky ground at altitudes between 525-2125 meters.

When I decided to write this article, I ended up reading more discussions about their name change in mid 2000. Now all Monadeniums have been included in the Euphorbia genre, although many collectors and enthusiasts still prefer to consider it still a genre in itself.

It is stated in The Timber Press Guide to Succulents Plants of the World by Fred Dortort, that “the key difference between Euphorbia and Monadenium lies in their respective inflorescences, with the cuplike fused bracts”. If you look at the cyathia of those previously named as Monadenium, all are quite similar, yet almost no Euphorbia carry a distinctively similar cyathia! Until the botanists are all done dissecting the DNAs, I think I will keep referring to these species as Monadenium stapelioides.

## DESCRIPTION:

Monadenium stapelioides grow into dense clusters. They are branching at the base and the stems can reach up to 15 inches in height. The stems can grow straight up but many tend to flop over.

Blooming usually happens in early Spring into the Summer. The flowers are greenish white or light pink and they are pretty small. Since this plant is dioecious, which means the male and female reproductive organs are separate, cross pollination is required to produce seeds.

The flowers!





The leaves are growing on the tip of the stem and also at the growing point, but they usually last only one season. They have purplish pink streaks on each leaf, making this plant look very lovely!

#### CULTIVATION/GROWTH:

*Monadenium stapelioides* is easy to grow. Just like other succulent plants, they need plenty of sun and well-drained soil. They like early to mid day sun and some shade in the afternoon, especially in our Texas Summer. Water only when they are dry during the Summer, and give very little in the winter when they are semi-dormant.

Propagation can be done by cutting, division, or by seed. Cutting and division methods are best done in the Spring. The two insects that are commonly found on them are red spiders and mealy bugs, so watch out for them! Best keep them indoors in the winter, since the lowest temperature that this plant can handle is 59° F.

#### REFERENCES:

<https://worldofsucculents.com/euphorbia-succulenta/>

<https://powo.science.kew.org/taxon/>

[http://www.llifle.com/Encyclopedia/SUCCULENTS/Family/Euphorbiaceae/29564/Monadenium\\_stapelioides](http://www.llifle.com/Encyclopedia/SUCCULENTS/Family/Euphorbiaceae/29564/Monadenium_stapelioides)



All photos in this article are belong to Karina Boese

## October Cactus of the Month

David Van Langen

### *Mammillaria melaleuca*

*Mammillaria melaleuca* is a small species of *Mammillaria* that seldom exceeds 3-4 inches tall and a couple inches across. It is associated with the Dolichothele group of Mamms as it has more prominent tubercles and a yellow flower larger than most. It also forms a thick taproot which becomes evident at the ground level as it ages. It is covered with a sparse number of light colored radial spines and has 1 to 3 longer central spines that are a darker purple ending with a black tip. None of the spines are heavy or fierce !! The bright yellow flowers are 1 to 1-1/2" long and have a darker reddish midstripe on the back side followed by fruit that is greenish brown to reddish.



This neat little cactus is only found in a small area of south western Tamaulipas at elevations of 4,000 to 6,000 feet in the Sierra Madre Oriental, in a restricted area south-west of the Jaumave Valley. It is considered on the Endangered List since it is only found in a very tiny area. Being a species of higher elevations, it grows among Juniper/ Pine and other forest plants, and is provided a richer soil than the hotter deserts below. The substrate is calcareous limestone.

In cultivation this plant will offset at the base more freely than in the wild. It is said to be fairly easy to grow as long as one remembers the thick taproot it grows on. Too wet for too long can be dangerous for cactus with a tap root. As always-- a loose fast draining mix is called for and a little extra organic matter could be used as it grows in mountains with more leaf debris. It most likely does well with some afternoon shade during the hottest months.

Every now and then these will be offered for sale online but are not commonly seen. I found these at the local Cactus King-I though it was a different species at first but was delighted when the yellow flowers appeared. I only bought a few and left a few for others !!!!!





## October Succulent of the Month

Wallace Ward

**NAME:** *Haworthia emelyae* x *H. turgida* (the pollen recipient is listed first, followed by the pollen donor)

**SYNONYMS:** This hybrid has no synonyms. The parent plants have several synonyms and infraspecific varieties.

**COMMON NAMES:** This hybrid has no common names.

**HABITAT/DISTRIBUTION:** *H. turgida* is endemic to Western Cape Province, South Africa, where it grows on limestone or slate cliffs shaded by thorn bushes at altitudes ranging from sea level to 4500 feet. *H. emelyae* grows at altitudes from sea level to 4500 feet primarily in the subtropical biome of Western Cape Province, South Africa. .

**DESCRIPTION:** This hybrid was created by me from an *H. turgida* as the pollen donor and *H. emelyae* as the pollen recipient in 2002. The “mother effect” appears to have produced a hybrid that is much more similar to *emelyae* than to *turgida*. *H. turgida* produces small rosettes of leaves in dense clusters of offsets, whereas *H. emelyae* rarely offsets at all. The photos I have provided show the hybrid, some 20 years old, has not yet produced a single offset. The leaves of the hybrid are larger and come to a point, which is unlike either parent plant, but overall the hybrid leaves more closely resemble those of *H. emelyae*.

I have lost both parent plants over time but would encourage the reader to call up images of the parent plants online. Modern authorities such as Bruce Bayer shy away from arguing for varieties, and a review of the literature on Haworthias in general show doubt about subspecies designations. Both parent plants and the hybrid have windows on the leaves.



**CULTIVATION/GROWTH:** Haworthias in general are fall/spring growers, and I have found growth largely shuts down during the heat of Houston summers. None of the parent plants or the hybrid discussed here tolerate strong sun. I have noticed in general that flowering tends to occur mostly in the spring around the time of the vernal equinox, but the return of equinoctial day length in the fall sometimes will bring forth flowers from some of my Haworthias. Well-drained soil is a must. I rarely water during the summer heat if the plant is outdoors in indirect light. I produced this hybrid by cross-pollinating pollen from

newly-bloomed flowers on one plant with more mature flowers on another. The flowers are in a raceme and are small and narrow, and I recommend open up the petals on the donor flower and recipient flower so as to deliver the pollen on-target and to avoid gooping pollen grains with nectar.

**USES:** I can only suggest growing these plants as a pastime since I am not aware of any practical application of the plants or their sap.

AVAILABILITY: Both parent species are widely available in trade.

REFERENCES: Bayer, M. Bruce. 1999. *Haworthia Revisited*. Hatfield, South Africa: Umdaus Press

Bayer, M. Bruce. *Haworthia Updates--Thoughts and Observations on the Genus Haworthia*.  
<https://haworthiaupdates.org>

Plants of the World Online: Kew Royal Botanic Gardens (most easily located by a word search online, followed by entering the plant name when the site comes up)

## Edible Opuntia

Thomas Cardinal

Out of curiosity I decided to visit a local La Michoacana Meat Market to check out all the imported products from Mexico. Inside one cooler I observed several one-pound bags of chopped Opuntia cactus pads with the brand name Ortega Nopalitos. Interestingly the bag describes them as cactus leaves. On the website [ortegas-nopalitos.com](http://ortegas-nopalitos.com) is listed the location of the dozen chain stores of La Michoacana Meat Markets in the Houston area where this product can be obtained. I have seen the whole pads in local stores but not the chopped and bagged version.



I purchased a bag of these Nopalitos vegetables to take home to try eating. An online recipe suggested adding the chopped pads with diced onions to be fried in a pan mixed with eggs to prepare scrambled eggs for breakfast. Visually the chopped cactus pads look like green peppers and have their own unique smell and taste. The uncooked chunks have a thick gooey viscous liquid feel unlike other vegetables. The meal tasted great, and I continue to use this refrigerated product.

What species of Opuntia do plantation in Mexico grow and harvest to make these edible products? Obviously spineless varieties would be the best choice. Dave Furgusen, group expert, responded to my Facebook Opuntiods group inquiry. The answer is no one knows for sure but *Opuntia ficus-indica* (cultivated species) *Opuntia cohenillifera* (cultivated species) and *Opuntia streptacantha* stout spined (wild species) or a combination of all is likely used in preparing edible Opuntia products (chopped and whole) sold in grocery stores.

**Field trip to the new botanic garden**  
July 9, 2022



## 2022 Summer Potting Party

**Karina Boese**



It was a nice warm Summer morning on Saturday, August 13th. A few of HCSS members got together for a potting party to get ready for our annual Fall sale this September.

The event this time took place at Old School Produce located at 5731 Cornish St, Houston, TX 77007.



We started mixing our soil around 10am. Dividing some plants to be repotted and making lots of plant tags!



A couple of members showed up a little later, and they brought a few plants that were already potted and ready to go; that saved us a lot of time. Thank you members! We finished around Noon and had some refreshments afterwards.



*See you at the 2022 HCSS Fall Sale!*

Friday, September 16th. 9am-5pm

Saturday, September 17th. 9am-3pm (or sooner if sold out!)

Location:

Metropolitan Multi-Service Center.  
1475 W Gray St, Houston, TX 77019

NEWS FROM CSSA

LILIANA CRACRAFT

A few months ago, the Cactus & Succulent Society of America (CSSA) organized the very first photography contest. The leadership wanted an activity that was challenging and emphasized the plants we love. They also wanted it to be a free benefit restricted to CSSA members and youths. They had 136 entries from all over the world, and had an adult and youth divisions.

The winners In the Adult category are:

**Honorable Mention - Navid Ahmadian's** image of Euphorbia spines taken at the Ruth Bancroft Gardens, Walnut Creek, CA,



**Third Place - Robin Brower's** closeup image of her Echinocereus rigidissimus bloom



**Honorable Mention - Robin Brower's** image of Opuntia erinacea taken at The Desert Botanical Garden.



**Second Place - Dr. Detlev Metzling's** closeup image of an areole of Gymnocalycium borthii subsp. nogo-lense with bud and spines



**First Place - Rob Skillin's** image of *Gethyllis nam-aquensis*, Richtersveld, South Africa



Because of the limited number of entries in the youth division, only a first and a second place were awarded. Those photographs were quite amazing and well-deserving of their award, particularly given the ages of entrants. The winners in the youth category are:

**Second Place - Ivan Reynolds' (8 yrs. old)** dichotomous division of a mammillaria (part of his "eyes" series)



Youth Category:

First Place: \$100.00 Gift certificate from Target, publication of the image in *To the Point*, and an 8 x 10 inch (approximate) print of the image. Second Place: \$25.00 credit toward purchase at the CSSA Seed Depot, Publication of the image in *To the Point*, and an 8 x 10 inch (approximate) print of the image.

We hope that you enjoyed the 2022 photo contest winning photos and will participate next year.

(All the photos and content used with permission from CSSA)

**First Place - Annika Chan's (15 yrs. old)** image of *Echeveria 'Etna'*



The 2022 Photo Contest Committee was formed by contest administrator and judge Irwin Lightstone, judges John Martinez, Nils Schirmacher, and Sue Hakala, and advisor Gunnar Eisel.

The prizes for the Adult Division included:

First Place: \$100.00 Gift certificate from B&H Photo – Video, publication of the image in *To the Point*, and an 8 x 10 inch (approximate) print of the image. Second Place: \$25.00 credit toward purchase at the CSSA Seed Depot, Publication of the image in *To the Point*, and an 8 x 10 inch (approximate) print of the image. Third Place: Publication of the image in *To the Point*, and an 8 x 10 inch (approximate) print of the image. Honorable Mention: Publication of the image in *To the Point*. (Dr. Metzger, 2nd place winner, declined the CSSA Seed Depot award due to import restrictions in Germany)

**HCCS SPEAKERS BUREAU**

Are you interested in becoming part of the HCCS Speaker’s Bureau? On occasion, we are contacted by members of gardening clubs and other plant societies around Houston and beyond, requesting a speaker. Most of these clubs meet during week days in the morning, but sometimes the presentations are scheduled on Saturdays. These clubs usually offer an honorarium. They can also provide a computer and an LCD projector.

If you are interested, please send an email message to [opuntia77@yahoo.com](mailto:opuntia77@yahoo.com) with:

- 1, Your contact information
2. Availability (weekdays/weekends)
3. A list of the topics you could cover with a short description.

Thank you very much!

Liliana R. Cracraft



Alluaudia procera by Karla Halpaap-Wood

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